

WONDERLAND OF FILMDOM SEEN BY VISITOR FROM HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

A. P. Taylor Writes of Marvelous Achievements at Universal City—Directors Much Impressed With Honolulu as Possible Location for Big Permanent Studios

(By A. P. TAYLOR)

The "Now you see it, and now you don't" phrase of old-time prestidigitators very aptly describes the before and after effects of the miles on miles of motion picture films which now attract nearly 15,000,000 people daily in the motion-picture houses of the United States. Hawaii included, for with all the deceptions and tricks practised, those who produce the varied scenes shown upon the theater screens the movie magnates stand at the head of the class.

A day spent at Universal City, Hollywood, California, which is the "Capital City of all Filmdom," is one replete with interest from early sunrise until nearly dusk, for the "Capital City of Filmdom" lives only in the sunlight, and darkness is merely a death shroud. The pulse of Filmdom beats with incredible rapidity while Old Sol smiles, but becomes almost lifeless when night draws its mantle over the oddest city that ever was created.

Apart from the American city of Los Angeles, Universal City has its own setting amid hills and gulches, cliffs and gulches, highlands and lowlands, tree-covered slopes and barren, dusty plains. One passes through medieval-like gates to enter this queer city, and once within these police-guarded gates, one may run the gamut of strange people from Broadway and Market street saunterers, back through the centuries to Cleopatra's time. One street resembles a narrow road of Pompeii; another of old Paris; and still another of the latest mining camp in Arizona.

Kann Is An Autoocrat.

It was my good fortune to be placed directly in the hands of Director-general Kann, under whose administration the destinies of Universal City have only recently been placed, a young man who is in fact governor-general, mayor, minister of foreign affairs, minister of finance, road supervisor and director in chief of every film produced by the 15 and more separate artists employed there.

Just within the gates of Universal City is the administration building, where Mr. Kann has his offices, and where his administrative staff is also domiciled. From almost every room comes the click of typewriters, for within that building is the scenario department in charge of Dr. Stafford, who was a medical officer in the Spanish-American War. Each scenario manuscript which comes to Universal City—and hundreds arrive every day—comes under his direct attention. There is a rapid examination of en-

narios; scores are returned to writers; others are dropped into the basket; others are gradually patched up, and, in the hands of assistants and stenographers, prepared to be placed in the hands of a score of directors, one each being assigned to a company of players.

Further along this hall is the publicity bureau, under the direction of Mr. Jonas, who formerly sent newspaper despatches from San Francisco to Honolulu, via the Federal Wireless. A score of typewriter machines are constantly in action from morning until night preparing the news stories for each film, to be used in connection with the display of the films all over the country.

There is a telephone exchange; there are rooms assigned to the directors of pictures; finances and all other matters are managed in this building.

One discovers occasionally a face which puzzles him, as people throng in and out of the building, and then it dawns upon the visitor that the person who just passed by was Bosworth, the principal film actor for the Jack London stories; and one also recognizes the big Malmute dog at his heels as the big leader of dogs in the Arctic scenes. A tall angular figure passes by, and then one remembers thrilling scenes in which Francis Ford was featured as the International spy. A handsome chap passes down the stairway, hurrying over toward the studios, and he is recognized as handsome "Jack" Kerrigan. Even "Alkali Ike," the comedian, sauntered in from town for a few moments and then returned to the City of Angels.

Motors Down to Zoo. In a big touring car, the director-general and the visitor motored through the streets to the Zoo. On one side was passed the technical department. On the right a great closed-in studio was in course of erection, and a little farther along, also on the right, was an open-air studio for indoor scenes. On the left was a ranch-house and a horse corral, used frequently in cowboy and mining town scenes. A little further along, on the left, were a few rough adobe buildings, and not very far away was a group of grass-thatched structures which were used in a South Sea Island film.

On the right again was another large open-air studio. Again, to the right was a good-sized hill surmounted by fierce-looking cannons. I asked what they represented and was told that Francis Ford had used those guns and that hill in one of his battle scenes.

The road then passed around the foot of a hill, a deep-cut road which was a fine piece of workmanship. A little further along was another group of ranch houses, and then on the left was the zoo.

I was first shown the wired-in triangular inclosure in which many jungle scenes in which leopards, lions and other wild animals had been featured. It was difficult to realize that within this small inclosure the wonderful jungle scenes had actually been enacted, but the painters' art, combined with a deceptive arrangement of shrubbery and trees, had completely transformed this interior into the "Heart of Africa."

Adjoining this inclosure were the kennels, and I saw many leopards, one of which was the fierce (?) leopard featured in the "Adventures of Martha," or some other actress, a leopard which appeared to fight desperately, but which was the tamest kind of a tabby-cat in reality.

In an adjoining kennel was a leopards with her two young ones, only two weeks old, and already adopted by "Kathlyn." Others, further along, contained lions and lionesses. There was a big elephant with his "make-up" still on, consisting of yellow lines about his eyes and on his head. When this big fellow was not being featured in the films, he was pulling wrecked automobiles out of swamps and assisting in construction work. There were dogs of all kinds and birds of all kinds.

Occasionally a motor car passed by filled with strange-looking folk, each one partly disguised by the brownish-yellowish grease-paint which all film actors are required to use, and all in strange garb.

We went back to the studio where several indoor scenes were being filmed. Cleo Madison, a remarkable film actress, was, in this instance, directing the taking of a film. Standing by the camera man, with features all in play, arms and hands waving, and almost enacting the parts before her, Miss Madison was pointed out as one of the best directors of films today.

Kerrigan Has "Temperament."

Before us was the interior of a small hotel and the scene at that moment showed a visitor registering and being received by a most affable clerk. Further along, "Jack" Kerrigan, in evening dress, was working, with canvases propped up to prevent intrusion, for his temperament is such that his best work is done only when an audience is not present.

Otto Turner, one of the cleverest directors in the game, was personally directing this scene. Turner is short and stout, but he was able to show exactly how a young man should make love to a girl, and vice versa; just how the arms of a lover should be placed around the neck of the loved one, and so on.

While the movies are called the "silent drama," yet they are far from silent, for every actor talks as he works out his scenes, and talks from manuscript. It is not the mere movement of the lips just to accompany some scene, but the words exactly fit the action.

A little further along was a scene in an exclusive club house, actors in evening dress being seated at tables playing cards, or lounging in deep chairs near the roaring fireplace, or playing billiards, with attendants moving about and looking after the wants of the "members."

This scene was so big and had so many actors in it that the observation galleries for visitors, which were about 40 feet opposite, were crowded with interested gazers.

Crowded With Visitors. Not a day passes but Universal City is crowded with visitors, for it has become considered one of the chief places of interest near Los Angeles. To miss Universal City in a visit to Los Angeles would be like leaving Niagara Falls out of a visit to Buffalo.

The comedians and the slapstick actors are generally grouped in a studio of their own, quite apart from those who are interpreting dramas, because their interpretations require all manner of noises. One would imagine that a three-ring circus was in progress to hear the shouts and other accompanying noises when comedy films are being worked out.

I saw Max Asher in one of his scenes, his make-up being that of the old down East Yankee farmer.

Some of the studios are open to the sky, with an arrangement of ropes and canvases, which can be pulled over parts of the studio when the sun becomes too intense. There are other studios which are entirely enclosed with glass and canvas, so that electric lights may be used to bring about an effect of sunlight, and when the day is dark and inclined to be rainy, the enclosed studio can be used and time thereby saved.

There has been a tremendous waste of energy, material and money in a place like Universal City. Sometimes an elaborate scene has been set and the camera man is ready to work; the sun is clouded over and there is a long wait. Sometimes thousands of feet of film have to be retaken, and there again is a great loss. Sometimes, after a scene is set, the pictures cannot be taken, and the actors have to be dismissed until the following day—but the pay goes right on.

Big Mechanical Department.

Over in the mechanical department, where at one time there was a tremendous waste of material, every effort now is being made to save material and money. However, the public no longer wants to be deceived by interiors in which painted canvas only is used. Now, where there is a window set in the canvas wall, the molding is no longer painted on. The mechanical department has a planing mill, about half the size of Jack Lucas' mill on Fort Street, and mouldings are turned out to fit the character of the window or the character of the room. These are of actual wood, turned with precision, and fitted on by carpenters.

Walls painted to represent wall paper are no longer used. Paper hangings have now been added to the long list of workmen found in Universal City. They hang actual and sometimes expensive wall paper on the canvas walls. Elaborate indoor settings may be used for only half an hour of

though the preparations may have taken days. The scenes once completed by the camera, the paper is stripped from the wall.

The carpenter is one of the big features in Universal City, for the canvases scenes have to be placed on wooden frames. The plasterer has a large amount of work to do and even the plumber has his duties to perform.

In the property rooms—and these are like great warehouses—painters are steadily at work. Some are artists who turn out only portraits of well-known men, and reproduce the masterpieces of old time painters, for interiors must have portraits hanging upon the walls, and these portraits must fit the times. There are draftsmen and designers who prepare upon paper the street scenes which must exactly fit each play.

I saw the street and the building designs which were used in a play in which Pavlova, the Russian actress was featured. This setting was placed upon a hillside and plain, the buildings being of medieval design with battlements and great openings piercing the walls.

When one looks upon the screens and sees a beautiful house interior and the actors moving as though they were actually within that interior, one meets with a surprise when viewing that scene upon the studio stage. There is no ceiling to this interior, and the beautiful chandeliers which one sees upon the screens are merely tied to boards which lie across the tops of the walls, a piece of rope or wire generally being used to hang the chandeliers.

The actor who appears in a drawing room in evening dress wears rather odd clothes. His shirt front is yellow, as is also his collar, for the yellow shows a distinct white in the pictures and better than the white itself.

The property rooms are filled with a list of costumes of every age from the days of the Pharaohs of Egypt to the day and age of Roosevelt. The furniture is of the ancient Chinese dynasty down to the rough clabboard furnishings for the miner's cabin or the Fifth Avenue drawing room or the palace of a monarch.

Antique shops, second hand stores and even "first hand stores" are constantly under surveillance by the picture magnates, for immense quantities of properties must be kept on hand for any and all cases.

As the camera man finishes his work, his film is sent to the laboratories, and in the darksome rooms, men and women work like uncanny beings to prepare the films for service in the tens of thousands of theaters on the mainland. Experts go over these films and closely watch defects. Others are expert in cutting out unwanted portions and piecing the remainder together.

Made Ready for Critics. Then, finally, the film is ready for projection before the critics. In a room the film is adjusted to the camera; the critics take their places at a small table, over which are screened lights arranged so that they make their criticisms upon pads of paper, and the pictures are turned upon the screen. If there are any real defects

here is where they will be immediately found. After being subjected to this, they again go to the laboratories, are cut and pieced, and eventually placed in the film cans and sent broadcast over the land.

Halfway between Los Angeles and Universal City one comes across the Griffith studio; the studio of the man who presented "The Birth of a Nation" to the public, probably the greatest picture ever shown. Upon his grounds tower huge set pieces Egyptian in character, and also others medieval in design. I heard that Griffith has a million and a quarter dollars appropriated for his new plays. Just what these new and wonderful settings are to be, no one yet has an inkling. No doubt the plays will be of the days of the Pharaohs or of Cleopatra or the Crusaders, but whatever the films are to be, they will, no doubt, be wonderful productions.

Of what value is a movie city in a community? is often asked. I asked this question in Los Angeles, and was told that in addition to the great numbers of people who are actually upon the payroll of the movie companies—and the payrolls are exceedingly large—almost every working profession is represented; such as carpenters, plasterers, painters, paperhangers, road builders, photographers, stenographers and typists, telephone operators, and chauffeurs.

Business Houses Profit.

Of course, various business enterprises profit, for the producers and actors must have homes and must patronize the grocery, the meat market, the restaurants, the dry goods stores, the furnishing stores, the hardware firms, the lumber dealers, the contractors, the telephone company, the automobile garages, the furniture stores, the photographers, shoe stores, the drug stores. The movie people are as prone to become ill as others, and there are often accidents, and the hospitals are sometimes quite liberally patronized.

There is hardly a line of business which is not patronized by the movie city of Southern California, while, of course, every tourist who visits Los Angeles and other Southern California cities goes to see how movie pictures are taken.

I was asked by many of the motion picture people whether the people of the islands would assist in the establishment of a movie colony here. That was a big question and one which could not be answered, but I told them we had everything here which is requisite for the taking of pictures, such as an all-year-round summer climate—nearly 365 days of sunlight; unusual kinds of scenery; with a cosmopolitan class of people not to be found in Southern California; mountains and gulches, a great harbor and a wonderful ocean; thousands of American soldiers and sailors and marines; warships of all kinds; active volcanoes not to be found so accessible anywhere else; extinct craters, and so on.

The movie magnates are a trifle inclined to further investigate Hawaii as a possible field of action, and it would not surprise me if, in a short time, a movie colony was actually established in the Hawaiian Islands.

U. S. WARNED TO ARM OR QUIT WORLD POLICY

LONDON, England.—The Nation, commenting on President Wilson's speech about preparedness at the Manhattan Club, says the choice before the United States is in fact something "much more definite than the vague plea for a defensive force which Dr. Wilson puts forward."

"The new American militia, with all the costly paraphernalia of preparedness behind it, will never be required simply to defend the coasts of New England as the Swiss militia defends the passes of the Alps," says the Nation.

"If that were the issue, preparedness would be a waste. The question is rather whether the United States shall keep their place as a world power, with a world policy, unaggressive indeed, but sharply defined against possible claims by other powers, or whether they shall live their life self-contained within their own half continent."

"Bryanism clings to its moral maxims, but it does not in its utmost fervors and exaltations proposed to drop the Monroe Doctrine or to abate one item in its charter of the seas."

"Our struggle has forced America to arm, as it has forced most of the European neutrals to mobilize. This unwelcome consequence of our war conveys its lesson."

"Unless by some common impulse of wisdom we can close this war with a common repudiation of force as dramatic and as arresting as the object lesson of the war itself, we must expect that for many a year and many a decade preparedness will be the only moral which any actor or spectator will dare to draw from our tragedy."

ANTHRAX EPIDEMIC INCREASES IN NEW YORK

NEW YORK, N. Y.—Anthrax, the new nemesis of humanity, is declared to be increasing in New York. Specialists in treating the disease at Bellevue hospital told the Yale club that it always was considered in diagnosis.

Dr. Henry M. Silver, physician to Judge George F. Stackpole, a recent victim of the malady, described four recent cases in New York and vicinity. Three were treated at Bellevue. All were designated as cutaneous anthrax, a rare form of the disease.

Dr. Charles Norris, former bacteriologist at Bellevue, said anthrax bacilli have been shown to live 13 years on silk threads. "They will die in the sun in 100 hours," he said. "The X-ray will kill them in one to three hours."

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